

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make editorial changes thereto and generally improve the form thereof, and a substitute specification and abstract are provided. No new matter has been added by the substitute specification and abstract.

Claims 1-8 have been cancelled, and claims 9-19 have been added.

The instant invention pertains to a container suspending device. Container suspending devices are generally known in the art, but suffer from drawbacks as expressed on pages 1-3 of the original specification. Applicants have addressed and resolved these drawbacks by providing a unique container suspending device.

With reference to Fig. 1A, 1B, 3A and 4, for example, the inventive container suspending device comprises a container suspending base plate 12, fabricated by pulp molding, having circular openings 12a - 12f and lock pieces 13a - 13d extending inwardly from an inner peripheral edge of each of the circular openings. A diameter of the circular openings is such that a head part of a container C to be suspended by the container suspending base plate can pass through any of the circular openings, and a diameter of a virtual circle formed by interconnecting tips of the lock pieces is smaller than a diameter of a lock part formed around the head part of the container. The container suspending device also comprises a top plate 11, fabricated by pulp molding separately from the container suspending base plate, bonded on an upper side of the container suspending base plate, with the top plate having cap-shaped fitting parts to cover the head parts of containers when suspended by the container suspending plate.

Because the container suspending base plate and the top plate are fabricated by pulp molding, the container suspending device can be reused and does not cause any problems when processed as waste because it can be burned without generating any toxic gas. Additionally, by employing pulp molding, an entire body of the container suspending base plate, including the lock pieces, can be easily fabricated in a single molding process.

New claim 9 is believed to be representative of Applicants' inventive container suspending device.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Galbierz; claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP '557; claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Galbierz; and claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '557. These rejections are respectfully traversed in part, and the relied-upon references are not applicable with regard to the newly added claims for the following reasons.

Please note that new claim 9 basically corresponds to a combination of former claims 1, 4, 6 and 7, and accordingly, Galbierz and JP '557 will be discussed as they pertain to former claims 1, 4, 6 and 7.

Galbierz does not disclose or suggest the top plate as recited in claim 9, as recognized by the Examiner in not rejecting former claim 6 (which recited the top plate) over Galbierz. Thus, claim 9 is allowable over Galbierz.

In rejecting claim 6 over JP '557, the Examiner took the position that this reference discloses a container suspending device having a container suspending base plate 2 having circular openings and lock pieces 4 extending from inner peripheral edges of these circular openings, and also a top plate 3 bonded on an upper side of the container suspending base plate. The Examiner also indicated that the container suspending base plate and the top plate are made of paper; however, these plates are actually formed of a synthetic resin. Thus, for this reason alone, former claim 1 and new claim 9 are not anticipated by JP '557.

Additionally, claim 9 also requires that the top plate is fabricated by pulp molding separately from the container suspending base plate. Because the top plate including the cap-shaped fitting parts, and the container-suspending base plate including the lock pieces, are separately fabricated with different molds and then bonded, each mold has a simple structure and the finished product exhibits sufficiently high strength. To the contrary, in JP '557 the base plate and the top plate are not separately produced, but rather, the components which correspond to the lock pieces and cap-shaped fitting parts are integrally formed with the base plate. Thus, in JP

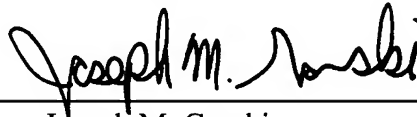
'557 a single mold having a complicated form is necessary, thereby making a manufacturing process difficult. For this additional reason, claim 9 is not anticipated by JP '557.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, with the allowed claims being 9-19, and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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